

Tip of the Point

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

Calendar

Aug 16 – Command Golf Tournament,
Medal of Honor Golf Course,
Quantico, Va.

Aug 16 – Civilian Appreciation Day
Picnic, Barnett Field, Quantico, Va.

The Point

Corporate Communications
Public Affairs Division
(703) 432-3958
mcscpao@usmc.mil

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Deadline for August is July 26.

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'The Point' submissions

Each month, *The Point* brings Marines, Civilian Marines and families the latest news in Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) and Program Executive Officer Land Systems (PEO LS). Topics include security, safety and features from contingency organizations, program management offices, program managers, deputy commanders, assistant commanders, support staff and many other teams. There are also articles about spouses and families. To submit an article for this newsletter, send it to mcscpao@usmc.mil. Submission deadlines fall two Thursdays prior to the next newsletter's distribution. *The Point* is distributed the first Tuesday of the month. Photographs are not published. Also, be sure to read *Families On Point* attached separately.

Inspector General at MCSC through Wednesday at least

Representatives from the office of the Inspector General (IG) will be at Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) through Wednesday, July 10 doing inspections.

MCSC was selected at random to be inspected and, although there is no requirement for the IG to alert the unit being inspected, MCSC was alerted to the coming inspection Tuesday, July 3.

Should the representatives deem that they need more time for inspection, the inspections could last longer.

eMarine for Marines, Civilian Marines and family members

Marine Corps Systems Command has its own secure customized unit eMarine site. All employees, both Civilian Marines and active-duty Marines, and their family members are strongly encouraged to register and use the new site.

The eMarine website provides essential information, including available resources and support, 24-hours a day regardless of geographic location. In order to access that information, employees and their family members must register through the site at www.eMarine.org.

If the site does not allow you to register, email the MCSC employee's first and last name, day and month of birth, and military rank or civilian pay plan and grade, to the Command's Family Readiness Officer Mac McManus via mcscpao@usmc.mil. Once he confirms the information you will be able to complete the registration at www.eMarine.org and access MCSC's eMarine site.

Command Golf Tourney set for Aug. 16

Marine Corps Systems Command's annual golf tournament will take place Aug. 16 at the Medal of Honor Golf Course on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. Sponsored by Combat Support Systems, the outing is a Marine Corps Birthday Ball fundraising event. The \$70 per person entry fee includes green fees, cart, lunch and free range balls. There is only enough room for 25 four-person teams and entry forms are due Aug. 2, unless sold out sooner. Individuals may join in the fun and will be placed on teams as needed. Teams without a four players may also submit entry forms and individuals will be added to fill up teams.

The event is a four-person, best-ball scramble tournament. Each player drives on every hole, and the team selects the best drive. Each player plays the second shot and again, the team selects the best shot. The round continues like this until the hole is completed. One score is recorded for each hole for the entire team. There is no minimum number of drives or total contributions required for each player. Prizes will be awarded for the top two teams, the player with the shot closest to the pin and the player with the longest drive.

Donations of \$5 will be accepted for mulligans (maximum two per person) and four feet of string (maximum four per team). The string is for putting only and can only be used once. Entry forms will soon be listed on VIPER. Entry forms with payment (cash or checks made out to MCSC Social Fund) need to be turned into Rick Daily or Master Gunnery Sergeant Isaac Robinson, Building 2200 in the basement. For more information, call (703) 432-3635 or (703) 432-3579.

Catch a Sunset Parade this summer

Marine Corps Systems Command has not yet been assigned to host a Sunset Parade this year as it has in past years. However, Command employees and their family members are still welcome to attend any Sunset Parade and sit on the lawn. A one-hour performance, the Sunset Parade features the music of "The Commandant's Own" Marine Drum and Bugle Corps and precision drill by the Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon. It is open to the public at no charge and reservations are not necessary. Spacious lawns provide ample room for guests to bring lawn chairs and blankets for informal viewing.

Since September 1956, marching and musical units from Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., have been paying tribute to those whose "uncommon valor was a common virtue" by presenting Sunset Parades in the shadow of the 32-foot high figures of the United States Marine Corps War Memorial. These summer parades are conducted on Tuesdays only, from now through Aug. 14. The event begins at 7 p.m. except for Aug. 7 and 14, which begin 30 minutes earlier.

There are no public parking spaces available at the Memorial grounds on Parade evenings. Guests may park at the Arlington National Cemetery Visitors' Center for a small fee. Marine Barracks provides a free shuttle bus service from the Visitors' Center to the War Memorial grounds from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. before the parade and from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. following the parade.

Register to vote for this fall's general election

Do you have your Federal Post Card Application in order to vote in this fall's General Election?

There is a new version of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) that should be used in place of the previous editions. It can be completed online www.fvap.gov/fpca/index.html or downloaded www.fvap.gov/resources/media/fpca.pdf.

In the event you only have access to the previous version, there are specific instructions on page 11 of the voting Assistance Guide www.fvap.gov/vao/guide.htm that needs to be followed for the FPCA form to be accepted by the various states. Major Alan Singleton, the Command's new Staff Secretary, is Marine Corps Systems Command's Voting Assistance Officer. He can provide additional help in filling out or mailing the FPCA form.

Individuals can sign up for targeted state-by-state voting information updates by clicking on the "Get Email Updates" link on the www.fvap.gov website, or at the following link: www.fvap.gov/contact/subscription.html.

Quantico's Civilian Appreciation Day Picnic set

Marine Corps Base Quantico's annual Civilian Appreciation Day Picnic is scheduled for Aug. 16 beginning at noon. Because of the temporary closure of Lunga Park, this year's event will be held on Barnett field on mainbase. Tickets may be purchased beginning July 23.

Civilian Recreation and Welfare Association

Marine Corps Base Quantico's Civilian Recreation and Welfare Association invites all base civilian employees to "Like" their Facebook page and make a comment or post there. Search on "Civilian Recreation and Welfare Association" or click here: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Civilian-Recreation-and-Welfare-Association/172144969463178>. You could win a fan of the day prize!

Core Communication Skills

There is a set of skills common to effective communicators. These "Five Core Communication Skills" are vital to a wide range of applications: leading, coaching and motivating employees, working with customers, resolving conflicts—any human interaction in the workplace.

The Core Communication Skills are:

- Listen for Understanding
- Align to Build Trust
- Give Feedback without Side Effects
- Use Multiple Perspectives
- Communicate with Precision

Listen for Understanding

It often is easiest to talk about what listening for understanding is *not*. It is *not* applying filters to our listening – filters such as listening for agreement or disagreement, listening for exception, (where the speaker is "wrong") omission, (what the speaker left out) or addition (hearing things that were not even said). A simple concept – yet tough to apply without skill, discipline and focus.

Align to Build Trust

Like attracts like. People feel more comfortable with and are more trusting of those who act like, speak like and view the world like they do. It's human nature. And at the same time, diversity of thought and experience are business essentials in our competitive, global environment.

The most effective communicators create rapport – which leads to trust – through an often unconscious, yet systematic, method of aligning with various elements of the interaction. These elements include the other person's mood, style, point of view, or positive intent – to name just a few.

Everyone can learn to be more effective in creating rapport and trust through alignment – it's not a secret of the gifted few. And we can all learn to do this with integrity, without compromising our own authenticity.

Give Feedback without Side Effects

There are several problems with feedback – problems that actually *cause* the resistance that people show to giving or even receiving it.

One problem: People often state conclusions and assumptions as if they are *facts*. We do this through both words and tone. We attribute motive and project feelings onto others ("You don't care about anyone but yourself!") and then wonder why people get defensive.

Underlying this problem is an inability to state facts *separate* from conclusions, share conclusions in a way that conveys ownership, and "check them out" through questions.

When people begin to change old behaviors and adopt a more useful and respectful feedback process, the results are astounding.

Use Multiple Perspectives

A perspective is a place from which things can be viewed or considered. One perspective is our own point of view – what I think, feel, see, need and want. How I view the situation. Useful, but limiting in situations requiring objectivity, empathy or consideration of the impact of context on a given circumstance.

We use hundreds of perspectives intentionally and unconsciously every day of our lives. Some are more powerful than others in providing us with useful information. When highly effective communicators are involved in situations that have much complexity and conflict, they tend to play out in their minds how each constituency would likely respond to certain ideas and actions. This produces a more encompassing understanding of the whole of the situation. In this way, perspectives inform us toward wisdom.

Whether we gain in wisdom is not a function of what happens to us, rather, how what we experience is understood, integrated and acted upon. This process can be learned through a set of steps, then called upon as situations demand it.

Communicate with Precision

Masterful communication is concrete, specific and sensory or data-based, creating a clear map from which two people can build shared understanding and meaning.

People make sense of the world around them in unique ways; the truth gets skewed – and thus communicated – in three generic ways: deletions, distortions and generalizations. Deletions (leaving information out), distortions (misrepresentations) and generalizations (e.g. “*None* of our people *ever* take *any* responsibility”) can be avoided as we “send” communication – and they can be corrected by the receiver through relevant, simple and on-target questions.